

CD/PV.653
16 June 1993

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE SIX HUNDRED AND FIFTY-THIRD PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva
on Wednesday, 16 June 1993, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Hou Zhitong (China)

The PRESIDENT (translated from Chinese): I declare open the 653rd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

It is a great honour for me and on behalf of the Conference to extend a warm welcome to the President of Romania, His Excellency Ion Iliescu, who is addressing the plenary meeting today. The President is at present leading a process of far-reaching development in the political, economic and social fields of his country, which has made a significant contribution to peace and security in Europe. In addition, Romania has been active in arms control and disarmament, including the Conference on Disarmament. His Excellency Ion Iliescu has played an important role at various stages of the recent history of Romania, in particular in asserting its sovereignty and independence from foreign domination and control and also in promoting the democratization of political life in his country. More recently, he assumed the heavy responsibilities of high office after achieving a substantial majority in the national elections held on 11 October 1992. All through his life the President has combined his political career with his activities as a distinguished scientist, devoting his professional concerns to the management and conservation of Romania's water resources, as well as to a number of environmental questions relating to modern science and technology. He has also promoted wide international contacts in various areas of scientific research.

Please allow me to take this opportunity to point out that the traditional friendship between the peoples of China and Romania, and the cooperation between the two countries in the political, economic and cultural fields, continues to develop. The high-level mutual visits between the officials of the two countries in recent years will further strengthen and promote these relations of friendship and cooperation. I am sure, Mr. President, that all members of the Conference welcome your interest in our work and will follow your address today in that spirit. I now give the floor to the President of Romania, His Excellency Ion Iliescu.

Mr. ILIESCU (Romania): It gives me particular pleasure to address this unique forum of negotiations in the field of arms control and disarmament. Its activities and the results are linked to so many hopes that the world may become a safer and better place for all nations on the threshold of the new millennium. I am pleased to take the floor at this time, when the Geneva Conference is presided by you, Mr. President, an eminent representative of the People's Republic of China, with which Romania enjoys relations of active cooperation and mutual respect. I am moved to be speaking here at the Palais des Nations, where 62 years ago the illustrious Romanian and European politician and diplomat, Nicolae Titulescu, with his impressive foresight, said that "the conference on disarmament will be the cornerstone of understanding among nations". His words are today more topical than ever.

Acting professionally, the Conference on Disarmament has achieved remarkable results. The most recent one, but also one of the most important, is the Convention on the prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons. The duties of the Geneva Conference and the expectations of all nations are even greater in the new international political and military environment. We are all vitally

interested in the dynamics and efficiency of its negotiations. As a result of the end of the cold war, the release of international relations from the ideological burden, as well as the crumbling of the pillars of the past, the risk of an East-West military confrontation has practically disappeared. Moreover, the structural changes in Central and Eastern Europe as well as the evolution in other parts of the world have created a new regional and world security environment. All these provide an incentive for relaunching negotiations, for imaginative approaches and achieving new progress on the road of arms regulations and disarmament.

The United Nations revival in accordance with its natural vocation, as defined by the Charter, the increasing roles of the General Assembly and especially of the Security Council, the strengthening of the CSCE and other regional structures, seem to confirm the growing ascendancy of the political over the military factor. This should bring about a genuinely positive change also for disarmament negotiations, as an integral part of the process for enhancing international peace and security. New standards of political and military conduct among nations have to be agreed upon, based on practical measures of arms control and reductions, and the strengthening of confidence and security.

Zones of instability, conflict and tension seem to proliferate all over the world. The Yugoslav tragedy is particularly dangerous for the peace and security of the whole of Europe, as it has brought back the flames of the war on the continent for the first time in more than 40 years. Other conflicts, in the former Soviet Union, as well as in other parts of the world, are no less preoccupying. On the European continent the widening economic gap between the new democracies in their transition towards the market economy and the developed countries is, together with other non-conventional risk factors, one of the main sources of instability and insecurity in Europe. Certainly, disarmament negotiations cannot provide answers and miraculous solutions to all problems. But I am confident that the Geneva disarmament Conference can, and has the ability to, exercise a significantly greater impact in its field of competence in support of the great political, economic and social processes which dominate the end of the twentieth century. Indeed, this is the challenge. It is a challenge for the Geneva Conference, for the participating States and undoubtedly for their representatives gathered here.

Romania approaches in a constructive spirit the questions regarding the Conference agenda, its structures and work methods. We welcome the present reflection process on the whole of the multilateral debating and negotiating mechanisms on arms control, disarmament, confidence-building and security-strengthening. Above its technical aspects, this is a political work which requires both a realistic foundation and a sense of vision, so that it can provide viable answers to the current and future security concerns of all nations. It is our hope that the result of the ongoing dialogue will be to optimize the relationships among the various structures, to update their agendas, to define the new priority objectives and to devise ways and means to achieve them.

(Mr. Iliescu, Romania)

Several items on the Conference agenda retain your attention, that seem to be among the more promising for negotiation and action at this stage. I would only refer to one of growing interest for the international community, namely "Transparency in armaments". It is of increasing concern for the United Nations, towards which the Geneva Conference on Disarmament cannot remain silent. Conventional arms are the ones used in the "hot spots" of our planet. Arms transfers often represent the main destabilizing factor in many regions of the world. Moreover, the balance of forces established over time or by international agreements in various sensitive regions and zones can be undermined through preferential conventional arms transfer policies. Under these circumstances, we believe that transparency in armaments, both in quantitative and qualitative terms, should rightfully hold an important place in the overall future activities of the Geneva Conference. In our view, the overall aspects regarding transparency in armaments could be regulated through an international treaty of universal vocation, which would set standards and procedures, as well as appropriate implementation mechanisms. In order to break the ground for such a comprehensive and complex work, the first stage could be aimed at agreed guidelines to serve as an international code of conduct. The experience of the five permanent members of the Security Council in this field could represent a starting-point and a useful contribution for the future efforts of the Geneva Conference, as well as those of the United Nations, the CSCE and various regional bodies.

Your negotiations will be successful to the extent that the political will of your Governments is able to place the common interests of nations to live in peace and security above all other considerations. I take this opportunity to address to the Geneva Conference an appeal to spare no energy in order to advance towards arms reduction and disarmament, confidence and security. As a faithful member of the United Nations and of the Conference on Disarmament, and as a partner in the European and Euro-Atlantic structures, Romania wishes to cooperate closely with the other participating States for these goals. I wish you every success in your endeavour to the benefit of international peace and security.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Chinese): I thank the President of Romania, His Excellency Ion Iliescu, for his important and comprehensive statement, which will be a valuable reference for our future work. I am also very grateful for his kind words addressed to my country and to myself.

I now intend to adjourn this plenary meeting. I invite delegations to remain in the conference room until the President leaves it.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held tomorrow, 17 June, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.